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## Children's Literature: Some Disputed Values

MIRIAM BLANTON HUBER

New York University,  
New York

A SHORT time ago a critic writing in one of the literary magazines spoke of the cumulative and depressing effect of the number of books and papers issued on the subject of child training. She said: "The child begins to appear as one of the major industries of the country."

Serious groups of people concerned with the welfare of children add evidence to the existence of this "industry." With the best of intentions, do we not stand in danger of making the care and training of children too difficult and complicated a process? Are we not likely to raise issues where in reality no issues exist?

In the field of children's literature, over-zealous members of the "child-industry" profess to see grave dangers in the reading that children do. Therefore, such reading must be guided by omniscient elders—omniscience secured by the application of interpretations of various sciences and philosophies. Unfortunately these interpretations differ, which considerably shakes the omniscience guiding children's destinies.

The public is familiar with the controversies that have arisen from time to

time in regard to the selection of literature for children. The seriousness with which various programs have been sponsored and various crusades have been attempted has engaged the attention of educators. In the majority of these controversies, teachers and school administrators have been prevented from accepting either of two conflicting points of view by the very violence of the claims made by the opposing factions. A net result, however, has been that teachers have a feeling of increased responsibility for what children read. This tends to hedge about with requirements what should be a pleasant, natural, and satisfying experience for children.

Though school people are not agreed upon the requirements that control children's reading, individual schools and teachers set them up for themselves. What the child shall read is prescribed for him and immediately a large part of the value of such reading is lost for the child. This busy interference by adults formerly concerned itself with the time-secure classics which were believed necessary to every child's experience in literature. This sort of direction still goes on, but in recent years a new line

of interference has been added. We are told that children must read books that interpret for them the world in which they live, and we adults choose for them the books that we believe will give them an insight into the complex civilization of the present day. It is possible that we may be in error in our choices. With the passage of time, we may find that books which we consider a correct interpretation of the present when seen in perspective may be distorted, superficial, and untrue.

Shall we, then, in attempting to avoid the dangers of regimenting a child's reading for him accept the alternative of doing nothing about it? The way in which we can best serve the reading needs of childhood is to *make books available for children* and give them latitude and freedom in selecting what they want to read.

If *books are available*—that is the big question. Then, if our schools are alive, if we provide stimulating experiences for children, the need and desire for books will follow naturally.

If we are willing to accept this philosophy of freedom and naturalness in permitting children to read, many of the disputed questions in regard to children's literature lose the significance attached to them. It is even difficult to understand the heated controversies that have raged in this field and, for that matter, continue to reach public print. Let us examine these controversial issues and decide for ourselves what is the truth in regard to them. Are children endangered by certain experiences in reading? Are certain kinds of literature designed for children unsuitable and should they be taboo?

The disputed values of Mother Goose and of the old fairy tales are probably the most familiar battle themes, but it seems to me there is another question that should receive the primary consideration of educators because of its time-

liness. Children are curious about their environment and the modern school makes every effort to give them as many actual experiences in exploring it as possible and, in addition, to supply vicarious experience through reading. It is true that the machine age has added new demands in children's reading. A realization of changed conditions in modern living has resulted in a tremendous emphasis among educators upon factual or informational material in children's reading. That such material is desirable no one would question, but too often the only element considered by educators in connection with such books is the information or facts. This is a shortsighted standard for selection, for facts have a queer way of not remaining facts and an elusive way of slipping out of one's memory. From the standpoint of the child's developing interest in reading, something more than facts is necessary in a book. There must be a sense of reality, and such books must contribute to an understanding of relationships, which is much more important than the acquisition of facts. It seems not too much to ask that such books, even in their simplest forms, have some literary excellence and that the artificial and often absurd devices for conveying information be rejected.

An interpretation of the phenomena of every-day living is an admitted need in children's reading, but we should not lose sight of the fact that concentration on the real world has brought no Utopia to mankind—not even a Utopia of material security and certainly no Utopia of the spirit. If literature is to contribute to satisfaction in living, it must deal with more permanent things than the externals of civilization. In fact, if children are to be fortified to endure the business of living, they need the faculty of idealizing human relationships and a belief in the possibility of improving human situations. It was

from such hopes and aspirations that the old folk and fairy tales were born. Today the necessity for believing that a better time may come is as great as it was centuries ago. In the old tales daring, bravery, originality, and clear thinking won against odds. Is it not still true that the hope of humanity lies in such forms of action?

The makers of the old folk tales were not afraid of greatness in their characters. Their heroes were single-hearted and courageous. In the old tales there is no indecision in results; justice and right win. There are no confused issues remaining when the tale is done. The very completeness of action in the folk tales satisfies children, and can we deny the benefit of clear-cut action moving swiftly to a desired end?

Those who would deny this literature to children, most frequently base their objection upon the elements of tragedy found in these tales. It appears to be their belief that if the child's reading is kept free of all tragic elements, the child himself will escape such experiences. It seems to me that this attitude exhibits a belief in some sort of magical protection more far-reaching than any of the magic invoked in the tales.

It is claimed, also, that the startling and violent events in the old fairy stories will terrify children. Observation of large numbers of children does not reveal such sensitiveness. Of course, it may be that neurotic children react unfavorably to certain stories, but in these cases the cause of the emotional instability needs to be examined and exposure to the stories can hardly be claimed as the cause. There is, however, such a large body of fine traditional literature for children that choices may be made in the material to be offered. Among those stories that have delighted children for a thousand years and more, comparatively few need be excluded because of the so-called horrors in

them. In building children's libraries, they may be left out, but such a criticism hardly seems a valid reason for denying to children generally these age-old stories that are the very stuff of which literature is made. There are those among us who feel that the most necessary quality in children's reading is robustness, and the elements in children's books that are to us anathema are sickly sentimentality and artificiality. It seems to us that the substitutes offered for folk and fairy stories should more deservedly be banned than many of the stories under fire.

Another mooted question in children's literature is the use of Mother Goose. At intervals, the public press is enlivened by this controversy. You may recall that in 1925 and again in 1929, acrimonious disputes arose over offering these jingles to "infant minds." It was claimed that the century-old practice must be discontinued, that present-day children must not be exposed to the unscrupulous tactics of "Taffy, the Welshman" or the intemperate habits of "Old King Cole." These reformers would deny to children the special place that nonsense verse holds as a balance to the over-serious tendency of living. They overlook the fact that the mind of one who hears nonsense verse is too busy with the delightful combinations to consider the meaning. But again a compromise may be effected. The body of Mother Goose rhymes is so extensive and varied that selection may be made. Those rhymes that are considered objectionable need not be given to children, but educators should pause a long while before sweeping out a body of literature that holds in it such verses as "Three Jovial Huntsmen" and "I Saw a Ship."

As a part of the same pattern of thinking, the reformers of children's literature would remove all the protective and prudential guidance offered by the old fables. It does seem, however,

# Pageant of America

JOSEPHINE COLLIER\*

Principal of Beverly Vista School,  
Beverly Hills, California

A PAGEANT based on the variegated past which made our national story, designed to combine historical accuracy, educational elements, and aesthetic merit, and at the same time to create an inquiring attitude toward our political, social, economic, and diplomatic development, was initiated by the students and faculty of the Beverly Vista School of Beverly Hills, California, in 1932.

The development of the "Pageant of America" is a long and fascinating story. Briefly, it was from the beginning, in execution and spirit, a school community affair, since it was made up of the material of all courses in the seventh and eighth grades. The first steps taken by the students were to form their own definition of a pageant and to choose for their pageant an array of episodes based on historical incidents and data, augmented by corresponding music, costumes, and lighting effects. The students themselves decided that symbolism was to be the foundation of the pageant and that the atmosphere should be set and maintained through music, both the actual music of the time and atmospheric music to express the feeling presented.

Immediately following this decision, the students, sustained by their social science teachers, began a research into the art, music, books, speeches, home life,

\*Teachers cooperating in the development of this pageant were: Miss Mary Boland, music; Mrs. Frances Jack, social science and literature; Miss Irene Thompson, Mrs. Frances Hooper, Mrs. Blanche Case, English; Miss Alice Fairall, Art; Mrs. Enid Lew Molina, sewing; Miss N. Ethel Haynor, Mrs. Grace Rathwell, Mathematics; Mr. Louis Hanchett, manual training; Miss Virginia Wilson, social science; Miss Lenore Townsend, librarian; Mrs. Elsie Liscom, Miss Dorothy Fox, dancing.

and industries of the American people. While this department continued to stimulate its students to search for the significance of history and to interpret it authentically, it became the duty of the English department to secure from the students ideas as to just how this picture of human life was to be represented on the stage—whether by word, pantomime, tableau, dance, song, lighting or sound effects.

The students turned also to the music department and inspired by the cooperation they received there, visited libraries where they sought the music which fitted into various periods of American history. This material they filed, and as the need for songs arose, the song that seemed most appropriate was learned. The classes listened to and compared from one to four phonograph records in every case where they felt a need for atmospheric music.

To the art classes fell the interesting task of sketching the costumes worn by our early explorers as well as the costumes worn by the people of the United States. Many of these costumes were reproduced in color. This department was also responsible for all stage settings. The home economics classes had purposeful lessons in drafting patterns, selecting materials, determining the amount of material for each garment, and in making costumes. The department of mathematics found an opportunity for practical application of such number work as they had developed. The application was here direct, not through so-called concrete problems, but through such problems as arose in the activity of



the classes. The physical education department aided the pupils in admirably depicting symbolism in the dancing numbers. The literature department, realizing that only creative power can give mastery over life, turned from the learning of subject matter and permitted the students to use their knowledge in the service of the creative spirit, to show in dramatic form the struggle of our forefathers in clearing the wilderness, the growth of friendship for other nations, and the hope for world peace.

The pageant, in addition to providing an interesting method of study, awakened the young students to the realization that we are the inheritors of a great past and that people are and always have been interdependent. Moreover the activity offered the students much experience in talking both formally and informally. This experience improved their ability to talk convincingly and effectively, which in turn led to loss of self-consciousness and gain in poise.

It is possible that the greatest permanent benefit to the two hundred students and the fifteen faculty members engaged in this production was the joy of experiencing the splendid cooperative spirit which prevailed. When the time neared for the final performance the students and teachers brought to class anything which might add to the effectiveness of another's contribution, thereby showing that they were more concerned with the production of the class than with their individual efforts.

Instrumental music for the pageant was obtained by playing certain parts of many victrola records. This was accomplished by operating two victrolas in such a manner as to make the spectacle move swiftly from scene to scene.

The stage was draped in black material which hung in straight simple folds. The front stage curtain was light green. The curtain across the flat

was black and in it was cut a large circular opening. The back wall of blue plaster was lighted in blue light. It was directly back of the circle that most of the scenes took place. There were times, however, when the actors stepped through the circle upon the stage.

The lights consisted of two spots, two floods, three borders of three colors, footlights of three colors, two spots on the balcony and a blue strip light at the base of the blue back wall.

#### EPISODE I

##### *Discovery and Exploration*

#### I. Dance of the Wilderness

New World Symphony, 1st Movement. Dvöřak.

(Curtain opens slowly with music)

A girl in diaphanous costume appears in the circle and dances a rhythmic dance, first showing great emotion, then gradually dying falls gently within the circle.

#### II. Indian Ceremonial Dance: The Sun Worshippers.

Zuñi Indian Song H. W. Loomis

A group of ten boys, dressed as Indians, rush through the circle, giving their Indian calls as they dance about the stage. They draw to the side of the stage as the stage becomes dark for the Processional.

##### *Processional*

#### III. Columbus and his Followers

Coronation March Meyerbeer

The stage lights are out while spot-lights from the balcony shine down the auditorium aisle as Columbus, clad in colorful Spanish costume, followed by other Spaniards, walks down the aisle and enters the stage, back of the circle. All pose in the softly lighted circle while other explorers and pirates come down the aisles. Columbus and his followers step through the circle onto the stage and await the French explorers who pause in the circle.

## IV. French Explorers: Fur Traders

March Heroique Saint-Saëns

The French explorers step through the circle and engage in a pantomime fur-trading scene with Indians as the English explorers pause in the circle.

## V. English Explorers: Pocahontas and John Smith

Country Gardens Grainger

Cabot brothers, Hudson and others pause in the circle, then step through the circle as Pocahontas and John Smith enact the life-saving scene in pantomime.

(Curtain)

## VI. Landing of Pilgrims

Old Hundred Bouregeois

The curtain opens on a group of Puritans, giving thanks for a safe landing, as they kneel about the Plymouth Rock. They arise and step through the circle onto the stage, to be followed by other settlers pausing in the circle. The Pilgrims, the Dutch, William Penn and the witch, each in turn steps onto the stage, giving the audience a graphic picture of the establishment of the white man.

VII. Establishment of the White Man  
New World Symphony, 1st Movement

Dvöřak

All the characters in Episode I are about the stage conversing happily with their new friends with whom they choose to make a new country, until they hear the first note of the "Song of Union" in which song they all join.

Song of Union Beethoven

(Curtain)

## EPISODE II.

*Revolutionary Period*

## I. John Bull and the Hessian Subdue the Colonies.

(Curtain opens on music)

Prelude C Sharp Minor

Rachmaninoff

John Bull steps through the circle

with a box of tea. Three colonists enter from the left. John Bull offers tea for sale. In the argument over tax John Bull motions for the Hessian. The colonists are pushed back. Franklin enters, observes the situation, and leaves for aid.

## II. Oppression Dance

Prelude Largo C Minor Chopin

Eight boys dressed in old clothes enter the stage through the circle and dance as John Bull wields his whip, while the Hessian stands by in defiant mood. As the boys dance they clutch their hands behind them and struggle to remain erect, but in spite of their effort they soon reach ground. Not to be subdued, however, they struggle up again and dance off the stage.

## III. Fire Dance

Firebird

Stravinsky

Nine girls enter the front of the stage dressed in red costumes to represent flames of fire. They dance, using red scarfs to illustrate the fire of the revolution. Fire flares up and then dies down by means of lights thrown on costumes.

## IV. Franklin Obtains French Aid

During the fire dance, Franklin and a few Frenchmen enter the stage from the left. The French flag appears in the circle. As the Hessian and John Bull withdraw the French flag slips out of sight and a large Independence bell appears in the circle. As the bell slips out of sight the American flag floats in the circle. Groups of colonists enter from both sides of the stage and sing songs of liberty and freedom.

Free America

Tune: British Grenadiers

Adams and Liberty

Tune: Anacreon in Heaven

(Curtain)

## EPISODE III

*Expansion—Pioneers from East to West*

I. "Pioneers, O Pioneers!" Whitman

A boy dressed as a pioneer appears in front of the stage curtain and recites the poem.

II. New Englanders Floating Down the Ohio

Song of Parting Behr  
(Front curtain opens slowly)

The curtain opens on the raft back of the circle. On the raft is a house at the door of which an old woman is seated mending. Another woman is seen busy about the meal. Corn, hay and farming paraphernalia are piled about the house. Men are standing by complacently chewing while children are playing at mumble-peg. The float is pulled along out of sight.

III. Departure of Covered Wagon

Song of Parting Behr

A number of loaded covered wagons are drawn along back of the circle. Lighting gives effect of great distance. A number of pioneers appear in the circle. They step through the circle onto the stage and talk of their hardships..

IV. Farewell Song sung by a group of six girls in the circle and echoed by pioneer men and women on the stage.

(Curtain is drawn over the circle)

V. Night on the Trail

All pioneers group themselves on the stage. The younger ones happy and active, the older ones quite worn out. Older members talk of home; the younger, sing.

VI. Dialogue of Night on the Trail

(Hank enters, tosses his gun to the ground and joins the pioneers who are singing. The pioneers stop singing and Hank speaks.)

Hank: Folks, you have a pretty large band here. Had any trouble with the Indians?

(To the leader of the Pioneers):

Is this your first trip to California?

Dan (leader of the Pioneers):

Yes, this is my first trip. How many times have you been there?

Hank: Well, I've made it through about four times and believe me they were not all easy.

Sally (One of the pioneers): Oh, let's do something cheerful.

Mary: Yes, we have enough hardships without talking of them.

Dan: Remember the "Old Brass Wagon"?

Kim: Tune the fiddles, boys, for the "Old Brass Wagon."

(They dance the Virginia Reel) "Cl'ar the Kitchen" is sung while three girls give a colorful dance.

"Pop Goes the Weasel," is sung by the scout. There is much laughter among the pioneers until they hear the warning cry of the Indians when they withdraw from the stage. Scout poses with gun in the circle. The pioneers sing off stage.

(Curtain drawn over the circle)

VII. Indian War Dance by Five Boys

Music made by the boys as they dance about the stage. They dance off the stage.

VIII. Forward, Pioneers!

California '49 Song

(Piano accompaniment)

(Pupils pass in front of the circle singing. Repeat marching for number)

IX. California Mission Garden

Sanctus Schubert

The curtain opens, showing a mission garden where a solitary monk is walking to and fro, solemnly saying his beads. The mission bells are heard and a few Indians and Spaniards come in to receive the padre's blessing.

Some pioneers arrive and are held spell-bound by the beauty of the scene. The monks welcome the strangers and food is brought for them. The ensemble sings while the curtain falls.

X. Spanish Dance

Il Choclo

Villoldo

Eight girls dressed in Spanish costumes give a Spanish dance on the stage.

EPISODE IV

*Civil Strife—Reunion—Progress  
Immigration—World Power*

I. Northern Home

Dialogue from "John Brown's  
Body"

Benét

The curtain over the circle is opened. Seated at a table covered with a plaid cloth on which is an old lighted lamp are Jack Ellyat, sister, mother and father. Just enough dialogue is given to recall conditions at the beginning of the Civil War.

(Curtain)

II. Southern Plantation

Old Songs and Dances

The curtain opens upon a group of colored people who are returning with their bags and baskets of cotton from a day of cotton picking. They step through the circle and group themselves about the stage, as they discuss their day's work. The older members rest while the younger members dance. All join in singing, swaying themselves in negro fashion. The music is accompanied by accordians and harmonicas. When the song, "Aunt Jemiah," is about finished, a boy and girl cake-walk with all the grace possible. The whole scene is refined, showing the best of the colored race, yet at the same time dwelling upon their superstitions, their man-

nerisms and their mode of life. This scene gives to the pageant much mirth.

III. Tramping of the Host of War  
Battle Hymn of the Republic  
Soldiers march back of the circle.  
(Quick curtain)

IV. Tenting Tonight Kittredge  
(Slow curtain on music)

Nine boys grouped as soldiers about a campfire sing "Tenting Tonight." Piano accompaniment.

(Curtain)

V. "Captain, My Captain"

Walt Whitman

(Read before the stage curtain while the stage is prepared for the next scene.)

VI. Growth of Industry

Metropolis, Part IV Grofé

A large curtain made in the art department which depicts late inventions is dropped for the back curtain. On the stage with pupils demonstrating at each are electric machines, typewriters, power machines from the manual training department, experiments from science classes, etc. No words are spoken as words could not be heard above the machinery.

VII. "I Am An American"

Elain Lieberman

This reading takes place in front of the stage curtain while the stage is cleared.

VIII. Melting Pot

Reading from THE MELTING

POT, Israel Zangwill and  
AROUND THE WORLD WITH  
THE GRAF ZEPPELIN Dostal

A very large pot is cut from paper and placed just back of the circle. Pupils dressed in the costumes of all lands and representing many walks of life, walk up a ladder, hid by the pot, and down another ladder, apparently



# Fairy Tales as Folklore

MINNIE H. SWINDELLS

Public Schools, Dallas, Texas

(Continued from January)

IT IS most interesting to note the manner in which the folk tale incidents give us information concerning early customs, information which is really of no mean historical significance. One of the first characteristics of the tales which would attract the attention of the adult reader (children are oblivious to such things, as were doubtless the savages among whom the tales arose) is the great number of incongruities. The king of a land may have to work for his bread; the king's daughter will be required to do all sorts of menial tasks. In the ODYSSEY we find Nausicaa doing the family washing! A hero of the lowest degree becomes the suitor for the hand of the princess, after he has been successful in some dangerous and arduous task. It is this successful suitor of low degree, rather than the king's son, who succeeds to the throne. These inconsistencies, evidently, are the traces of a very simply organized society. In such a society the king was really little more than headman of the village community, and he and his family were scarcely removed in daily life from his subjects. Stories of later periods make the king more regal in character, but the traces of his simple origin may cling to him. The fact that there were great numbers of these petty rulers and that their kingdoms were of no great size, accounts for the fact that in many of the tales the hero passes in so very short a time from the kingdom

of one king to that of another. Again, we are able to understand why the princess should so willingly marry the suitor of low degree; she herself was originally one of the people.

In the stories in which the daughter of a king is the reward of valor on the part of some hero, we have the traces of early marriage customs. Among the Dyaks of Borneo, for instance, a suitor must have taken so many heads before he can marry his chosen wife. When such a suitor marries the king's daughter and becomes king in her father's place, we have traces of the custom that, upon marriage, the man becomes of the wife's kin, going to live in her home, among her people. The Japanese story of "The Fire Fly's Lover" tells that the fire fly set for her lovers an impossible task, saying, "If they are wise, they will not try to perform it; but if they love their lives more than they love me, I do not want any of them." Hi-Marō, the prince of the fire flies, succeeds in bringing to the lady, fire, which consumes all of her other suitors. He wins her hand. The story of Atalanta in Greek mythology is the same type of incident.

The age of the matriarchate, when descent was reckoned through the woman, when knowledge and the elements of civilization (such as it was) were in her hands, influences another type of situation. This is the story in which the wife of the ogre, or of the stupid giant, is an attractive, clever woman. Recall the wife of the giant in "Jack and the Beanstalk." Christian influences tended to break down the place and power of woman, and to make man the center

\*In the preceding number, Miss Swindells defined fairy tales, discussed animism, fetishism and totemism as they occur in fairy lore, and cited theories which attempt to account for the resemblances among fairy tale incidents. In a forthcoming issue she will analyze familiar fairy tales from the point of view of folk literature.

of the social group. The honored priestess of primitive society became the witch. Here we get another incongruity, for the witch frequently appears in the story as the wise woman, or even the queen, reminiscent of the day when the mother occupied the all-important position in the household.

Another element which, of course, seldom fails to appear in fairy tales is the large and important part played by magic. Some of the more common and interesting types of magic are the ability on the part of some character to produce objects at will, the power of inanimate objects to assume forms of animate beings, the possession by one person of the power of charm over another person, the possibility of making magic and instantaneous flights through the air. One can readily recall instances of such incidents in the tales; the change of the rats into footmen in "Cinderella," the flights of Mercury, the messenger of the gods, in Greek mythology, the bear in "Snow White and Rose Red" who was under the spell of a magic charm. But the interesting thing about all of these magical elements is that they occur, not as the unusual or the unexpected, but quite as the accepted common affairs of every day life. And this is as we should expect; the folk tale and the fairy tale embody the magic beliefs of those who made them.

One common incident of fairy tales which probably offends most of us is the beauty of the wife of some monster—an ogre, a dwarf, or even an animal. These stories are undoubtedly derived from actual facts—distorted though these facts may be—of what happened when a lower and a higher race came into close contact in the same region. Men of the lower race, attracted by what seemed to them the unusual beauty of the women of the higher race, would abduct these women and take them to

the wild and remote regions where the lower race was finally driven. As time went on memory clothed these men in horrible and gigantic shapes, while the women were pictured as ever more and more lovely. Eventually the men would be referred to, not as men at all, but as monsters, as animals. And imagination gave to these "monsters" various deformities of mind and body. Such stories almost invariably arose where two hostile tribes were found near each other.

The question of taboo as found in fairy tales is one of infinite variety and interest. We find many stories involving the "name" taboo. This taboo grows out of the idea that an object's or a person's personality is definitely bound up in the name given him. It is highly dangerous for one person to know another's name. To know a person's name gives one complete power over him. Therefore people kept their real names secret and were known by nicknames only. The European story of "Tom - Tit - Tot," Grimm's story of "Rumpelstiltskin," the Scotch story of "Whuppitystoorie" are all based on the belief in the name taboo.

Closely related to the subject of magic, in fact one phase of magic, is the frequent recurrence of a supernatural sleep in so many of the stories. In some cases the sleep is brought on by means of some magical formula or charm, frequently by the use of music. Mythology points us to the story of how Mercury lured to sleep by magic music the hundred eyes of Argus Panoptes. The sleep may be brought about by mechanical means. A ring on the finger caused sleep in the Arabian story of "The World's Beauty." In "Briar Rose" sleep is produced by the prick of a spindle. The Scandinavian Valkyrie, Brynhild, is charmed into sleep by the prick of a thorn. And in a similar Irish tale, the maiden falls into

sleep after being pricked by a pin. These many cases of long and unnatural sleep found in the oldest of our stories make us wonder whether hypnotism was known and practiced among these early peoples. Many investigators cite incidents which seem to prove that medicine men among certain Negro tribes did use hypnotism. So, also, they tell us that the "ghost dance" among the Sioux Indians of North America was the result of hypnotic practices of the medicine men. If these findings be true, and we have little reason to believe they are false, may not the long sleeps of our stories be nothing but exaggerated accounts of hypnotic trances?

The Puss-In-Boots cycle best evidences the power of animals to talk and act as humans. To the little child today such power is accepted as quite natural; savages believed just as thoroughly in it. According to the savage, one never knew when some animal was a human in animal form, and being human, of course, could talk and act as a human. In many parts of Europe today the superstition persists among the peasants that animals, especially oxen, have the power of speech on Christmas. At such times, however, man must avoid hearing the animals talk for he will surely be struck dead should he hear. Buddhist literature abounds in beast tales in which by word and action the animals impart moral lessons.

Then there is the cycle of stories in which the hero is swallowed by some creature. In almost all of these stories, the one swallowed is finally disgorged. In "Red Riding Hood" the wolf swallows the grandmother. Tom Thumb is swallowed successively by a cow, a fish, and a giant. In another story a wolf swallows several kids, but the mother of the kids, finding the wolf asleep, cuts open his stomach, takes out the children, and fills the wolf with stones. When he awakens he is thirsty, and goes to the

stream to drink. The weight of the stones throws him into the water and he is drowned. Such a conclusion to one of these "swallowing" stories is very typical. Andrew Lang has pointed out the resemblance between these stories and the Greek myth of Cronus. Cronus, to forestall a prophecy that he should be overcome by one of his own sons, swallowed each of children as soon as it was born. Finally he was deceived at the birth of Zeus, and was given a stone to swallow, rather than the infant Zeus. The stone and the children were all later disgorged.

Some have attempted to trace all these "swallow" stories to nature myths which were told to explain some such phenomenon as the sinking of the sun, for it really seemed to the primitive that the sun was swallowed up by the horizon, or by something at the horizon. Frequently the horizon was seen at some great sea or ocean. Then the idea was easily conceived that a great fish came up out of the sea and swallowed up the sun. Similarly, the sun was thought of as swallowing the stars.

There is no element in fairy tales more irrational than that in which the human being is represented as being married to a beast. Perrault's "Beauty and the Beast" is the most perfectly typical of this group of stories. In most of these stories as we now have them the hero is in the form of a beast as the result of some enchantment, which enchantment is finally broken and the hero beast appears in the form of a charming prince. Many examples of Greek gods who took upon themselves animal forms for amorous ends may be cited. One explanation for such stories is that they are survivals from an earlier age when the gods were actually thought of as animals. It is obvious that beast marriages point to a state of primitive thought when animism and totemism held absolute sway. In such a state

little or no distinction was made between humans and animals.

In many of the tales we find distinct traces of cannibalism. Horrible as it may seem, we know that cannibalism has been practiced by most primitive tribes at some period early in their existence. One type of these stories involves the eating of human flesh by an ogre, a giant, or a demon. The story of Odysseus's adventure with Polyphemus, said by some to be a very old Greek folk tale taken bodily into the epic, is of this type. There are many others. Frequently the theme deals with the outwitting of the ogre or the giant. Such a theme is found in "Hans and Gretel" and in "Jack and the Beanstalk." In the fairy tales, the cannibalistic creature, be he man or ogre, seems to personify cannibal tribes of lower races, his traits being exaggerated by those to whom the act had become abhorrent. The stupidity of the ogre or giant is always shown, suggesting that he comes from a lower race, whose wit functions less readily than does that of a higher race. The hero, of course, always is represented as coming from the higher race. Here again we see the conflict between lower and higher races.

The cannibal witch is probably of different origin from that of the ogre. She is most likely a survival of the Earth-Goddess, who presided at the cannibalistic rituals connected with the worship of the gods. The priestess was regarded in these earliest times as worthy of great honor, for human sacrifice was part of worship. The introduction of Christianity brought a change in the attitude toward these women; they became regarded as witches.

We are frequently struck by the many tales of three sons or three daughters in

which almost invariably the youngest is the successful one. There are many, many variations of this theme, but they all point back to a time when, in fact, the youngest child was the most important member of the family. Gradually the idea gave way before the idea of primogeniture. As the new idea works its way into the thought and customs of the people, the youngest son becomes no longer an object of respect and honor, but of ridicule and scorn. Hence we find in many of the tales arising at the time when this change of idea was going on, the youngest son represented as something of a simpleton. His older brothers, especially the eldest, are his enemies. He is the victim of all sorts of plots and evil designs. The conflicting attitude of the people is shown, however, in the fact that the simpleton son may in the end become the honored hero. He wins the fair lady and they "all live happily ever after." Some have very aptly suggested that this type of story was invented to stem the tide of the new order of heritage which was gradually forcing its way into custom. Whether or not the idea of primogeniture determining heritage was a difficult one for early peoples to accept, we do find this type of story one of the most popular of all fairy tale motifs.

And so we might go on indefinitely calling attention to incidents and ideas common in our fairy tales, these tales which are so valuable a part of our literary heritage. But the examples cited are enough to prove that the fairy tale in which the little child glories is in reality but a folk tale, and that a folk tale is but a survival, in a higher civilization, of benefits and practices which actually formed an important part in the daily lives of primitive tribes.

(To be continued)



# Books with American Settings by Cornelia Meigs

KATHARINE O. ROBERTS

Public Library, Davenport, Iowa

CORNELIA Meigs' great grandfather was Commodore John Rogers. The Commodore has many descendants still following the sea, but a great grand-daughter may follow the sea as well as a great grandson, though in other ways than by sailing upon it.

As a little girl, Cornelia Meigs lived by a great blue river, and although she spent the summer on her grandfather's farm in Vermont, she did not see the ocean until she was nine years old. In her recent book, *SWIFT RIVERS*, she describes what the first sight of the ocean means to a lad who has lived all of his life inland. But even before she ever saw such a great sheet of water, she played that the pine trees were rocking masts, and in their branches pretended that she was a sailor in a crow's nest, keeping watch for a pirate sail. While her sisters played at games out of Robin Hood she made long games of her own that had to do with ships.

We may well consider Miss Meigs an Iowa author. She was born in Rock Island, Ill., but was educated in the Public Schools of Keokuk, Iowa, where her father is United States Civil Engineer in charge of river improvement. She was graduated from Bryn Mawr in 1908, and taught English for some years after that in Davenport, Iowa, at St. Katherine's, beginning at this time to write and to try out her stories on the children of the school. She published several stories under the pseudonym of "Adair Aldon." She has a

\*Prepared under the direction of Miss Eugenia Brunot, Chairman, Book Evaluation Committee, Section for Library Work with Children, American Library Association, 1933.

"very large collection" of nephews and nieces, who, she says, "read my stories the moment they are written and help me much with their comments."

Miss Meigs keeps her papers and manuscripts in John Rogers' little green sea chest that went with him to the wars and back again, and whenever she takes up her pen to begin a new piece of work, the spirit of the old Commodore seems to whisper in her ear, "Let it be about ships."

Miss Meigs has been described as a woman of spiritual reserve and seriousness, with an uncommon refinement of intellect and sentiment — "a mental fastidiousness that rejects inevitably the phrase or sentiment that has a tinge of commonness."

Her stories are not only good, stout sea yarns, but each one definitely depicts a period in American history.

*MASTER SIMON'S GARDEN* breathes of a gentle soul who dared to go against the preachings of the stern New England Puritans and he and his garden stand serenely for color and gaiety and against rigid Puritanism and intolerance. The second part of the story is concerned with Master Simon's great grandchild, Stephen, at the time of the Revolution.

*TRADE WIND* was written in the inland reaches of Iowa. The enterprise, adventure, and dangers that marked the rise of the maritime glory of the American colonies and nation form a splendid field for tales for boys. Trade was the pursuit that solidified the front of the thirteen colonies, widely separated in their geographical aspect, their points of

view and their interests. As the resources of the West called to the men of the East, they forsook their ships and the carrying trade slowly died away. However, in the early months of 1917 the shipyards on the Atlantic coast awoke from a century of slumber and for a few fleeting years the American flag was seen on the seven seas. It might be quite possible that this awakening prompted the writing of *TRADE WIND*.

David Dennison's maiden trip on the *Santa Maria* proved to be quite exciting. On this cruise occurred an escape from a British brig; a stop at Half Moon Island, where old Adam Applegate, pirate, sorcerer, and patriot dwelt; an unsuccessful attempt to discharge cargo in the West Indian ports; an attack on the ship by Carib Indians; and encounters with Algerine pirates. David does not lack good, hearty companions. There is Andrew Bardwell, kindly yet stern, in command; Master James Babcock, a spirited and adventurous gentleman; Anthony Churchill, divinity student and patriot. To the writing of this book the author has brought more than the tools of superior workmanship. She has given to it the creative results of a long and honorable tradition of the sea which descended to her from her great-grandfather, Commodore John Rogers, one time commander of the U. S. S. *Constitution*, a man who participated in the revolt, sailed on such cruises and touched at the ports she describes. This tradition has been perpetuated by son after son of the same name until it was terminated within our own day by the untimely death of Commander John Rogers, the naval flier.

As a result there lives again in the pages of *TRADE WIND* the glamour of the carrying trade that once was ours. It was the traffic that gave rise to that swift swallow of the sea, the American clipper ship, and made familiar in the

ports of the Indies, East and West and in the maritime centers of Europe the figure of a bronzed and clear-eyed fellow, the American sailor.

Furthermore, the author's work bespeaks familiarity with ships and ports. Her pictures are not obstructed by the technical detail that so often mars a story of the sea. The reader gains vivid pictures of Yankee schooners, brigs and frigates of the Royal Navy, the Dutch East Indiaman and the feluccas of the Barbary pirates. As an old sailor remarks to David, "You can read a nation's history in the build and rigging of her ships."

The format of this book is in keeping with the story and lends itself readily to enjoyable reading. The type is clear and well spaced on the page. It contains eight full page illustrations in color by Henry Pitz, whose portrayal of some of the dramatic scenes in the tale is apt and convincing. It has the quality and value of a story rooted in sound research and good writing. It is then very fitting that this fine piece of literature for children should receive the \$2000 Beacon Hill Book Shelf prize offered by Little, Brown and Company.

*CLEARING WEATHER* is the story of young Nicholas Drury's struggle to maintain his uncle's shipyard in a Massachusetts town, in the difficult years following the Revolution, and of the building of the beautiful ship, *Jocasta*. Then there is the thrilling story of the *Jocasta's* voyage with "clearing weather" at last for the ship, for Nicholas, and for Branscombe. The book reminds one of Conrad's *YOUTH* in its pictures of courageous struggle, long sustained. The story marches grandly and is a distinguished piece of work.

The three books which we have just discussed treat of the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. The scene now changes however from early New England to Iowa during Black Hawk's

chieftainship in *AS THE CROW FLIES*. The plot of the story deals with Zebulon Pike's attempts to explore the upper reaches of the Mississippi River which had just been acquired by the Louisiana Purchase, but had never been explored by a white man. The story clings very closely indeed to the historical records, only very few of the characters being imagined. It is an attempt to tell what was going on amongst the Indians while the events which Zebulon Pike put on record were happening to him. The author states that Pike himself, the Indians, Black Hawk, Wabasha, Petit Corbeau, trader Cloud and his son, McGillis and Grant are all portraits. Only the Indian hero, Natzoon, and Tauneen, Chichoba, and Sagona are made up. Black-Hawk sends the young Indian Natzoon to spy on the white men and to warn other tribes against them. The conflicting claims and view points of the Indians and the white men are both made clear in the story in the persons of Pike and the Natzoon. We get an impressive picture of Black Hawk sitting in lonely grandeur on his lookout point smoking his pipe, working up his hatred of the encroaching white man.

*SWIFT RIVERS* moves still further west for its locale and is situated in Minnesota in 1835. This is another story with the Mississippi River for its blue water.

Christian Dahlberg, a youth of Swed-

ish blood, living with his grandfather on the Goose Wing River in the wilderness of northern Minnesota, is inspired by a chance conversation to cut certain trees and float them in the spring flood to the lumber market at St. Louis. The entire book is concerned with the adventures of this colossal undertaking. The incidents and mishaps described are those appertaining to such an undertaking.

We meet the crack river pilot, Pierre Dumenille, a man of French and Indian parentage, who combines French charm with Indian woodcraft. Another character is Stuart Hale, a young man who started out as a ne'er-do-well but develops fine staying qualities during the hardships and hazards of the trip.

The tale moves with a broad sweep and carries one along to its triumphant finish like the current of a river. It gives one a sympathetic picture of those simple, sturdy Swedish folk who brought so much that was strong and fine to our civilization.

The author has gained most of her historical background for *SWIFT RIVERS* by word of mouth from those whose forebears participated in these logging ventures.

All these books show that Miss Meigs writes with a magic pen and gives the children a fine picture of the history and development of our country, as exemplified by the activities carried on by men on her great rivers and seas.

From *MISCHIEF IN MAYFIELD*  
by Peggy Bacon.



Courtesy Harcourt, Brace  
and Company

# Modern Wonder Tales\*

IDA LEE KAPLAN

Richmond, Virginia.

FANCIFUL tales form a large part of the average child's knowledge of literature. While they should not embrace his entire repertoire of reading, or occupy a position of undue prominence, they hold a place of value in education. They appeal to the child's interests and are a means of expressing his instincts; they develop and cultivate his imagination, his philosophy of life, his creativeness, and his appreciation of the beautiful, and so have a definite place in the school, in the library, and in the home.

This list of books comprises modern wonder tales, that is, fanciful stories written since the year 1900. The modern fairy tale destroys and erases many or all of the objections set down by some critics against the traditional fairy tale. The modern story does not carry ideas of brutality, torture, cruelty, trickery, greed, cunning, or slyness. It does not suggest coarse social traits. It does not abound in superstitions, untruthfulness, ignominy, or overstimulation. The best modern fairy story, the type selected for this list, is delightful. It is fantastic, yes. But must we not sometimes reach beyond the realm of realism and absolute sobriety? A little fun, a bit of nonsense, a pinch of hallucination, a sprinkle of the mystic—they offer balm to a mind crammed full of facts, dates, figures, and literalness.

In selecting the following stories, the writer has taken these things into consideration: child's interest, style, structure, content, narrative value, treatment,

characters, and format. They were not chosen for a particular grade or age, or for inclusion in or reference to certain courses of study. However, the list does include fairy tales suitable for the very young, who has to be read to, and for the older child. Some few are peculiar to a certain locality. These may be used to advantage in connection with the study of any of these territories.

The books CANDLELIGHT STORIES, JATAKA TALES OUT OF OLD INDIA, and TALES FROM SILVER LANDS, contain traditional materials, which have been recently re-adapted and edited by well-known authors.

Ages 3 to 7

THE POPPY SEED CAKES. Margery Clark, Doubleday, Doran, 1924

Ages 6 to 9

THE FAIRY CIRCUS. Dorothy P. Lathrop, Macmillan, 1931

Ages 8 to 10

CANDLE-LIGHT STORIES. Veronica S. Hutchinson, Minton, Balch, 1928

THE GIRL WHO SAT BY THE ASHES. Padraic Colum, Macmillan, 1924

THE LITTLE WOODEN DOLL. Margery Williams Bianco, Macmillan, 1925

PEACOCK EGGS. Margaret and Mary Baker, Duffield and Green, 1932

RACKETTY PACKETTY HOUSE. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Century, 1906

RAINBOW BOY. Hewes Lancaster, Albert Whitman, 1926

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARWHOPPLE. Rose Fyleman, Doubleday, Doran, 1931

THE TALKING BIRD. Idella Purnell and John M. Weatherwax, Macmillan, 1930

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT. Margery Williams Bianco, Doubleday, Doran, 1927

WINNIE-THE-POOH. A. A. Milne, E. P. Dutton, 1926

\*This article was prepared under the direction of Miss Florence L. Ingram, Instructor in English, Richmond Normal School, Richmond, Virginia.



## Ages 8 to 12

A BAKER'S DOZEN. Mary Gould Davis, Harcourt, Brace, 1930

THE CAT WHO WENT TO HEAVEN. Elizabeth Coatsworth, Macmillan, 1930

A DOLL, TWO CHILDREN AND THREE STORKS. Teresah, E. P. Dutton, 1930

FLOATING ISLAND. Anne Parrish, Harper, 1930

THE MAGIC PAWNSHOP. Rachel Field, E. P. Dutton, 1927

THE POT OF GOLD, Elizabeth Howard Atkins, Frederick A. Stokes, 1930

PUDDING LANE PEOPLE. Sarah Addington, Little, Brown, 1926

WHY THE CHIMES RANG. Raymond MacDonald Alden, Bobbs-Merrill, 1960

## Ages 9 to 12

CALIFORNIA FAIRY TALES. Monica Shannon, Doubleday, Page, 1926

## Ages 10 to 12

THE FLYING CARPET. Scribner, 1925

JATAKA TALES OUT OF OLD INDIA. Marguerite Aspinwall, G. P. Putnam, 1920

NUMBER FIVE JOY STREET. D. Appleton, 1927

NUMBER NINE JOY STREET. D. Appleton, 1931

TALES FROM SILVER LANDS. Charles J. Finger, Doubleday, Doran.

## Ages 10 to 14

ROOTABAGA STORIES. Carl Sandburg, Harcourt, Brace, 1922

*Tales Pertaining to Certain Localities*

California: CALIFORNIA FAIRY TALES

The Middle West: ROOTABAGA STORIES

Germany: A DOLL, TWO CHILDREN AND THREE STORKS

India: JATAKA TALES OUT OF OLD INDIA

Japan: THE CAT WHO WENT TO HEAVEN

Mexico: THE TALKING BIRD

South America: TALES FROM SILVER LANDS

## PAGEANT OF AMERICA

(Continued from page 40)

disappearing into the melting pot. In this group, distinguished by their costumes, are Mexicans, Russians, Czecho-Slovakians, Turks, Persians, Swedes, Norwegians, Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Scotch, Filipinos, Alsatians, Spanish, Irish, French and others.

## IX. "The Land Where Hate Should Die" Dennis A. McCarthy

This reading takes place in front of the stage curtain while the stage is cleared.

## X. World War

## Tableaux

The hatred and not the glory of war is shown in this scene. A boy representing war appears in the circle. On the front of the stage are a number of soldiers, some wounded. They are marching to war. They are aided by

Red Cross nurses and served doughnuts by the Salvation Army girls. A refugee family, consisting of grandfather, mother and children, come onto the stage with all their earthly possessions in an old wheel-barrow. The priest and the Salvation Army aid the family.

## XI. World Peace Reigns

A girl dressed in white, kneels in the circle, and remains for a few moments in happy meditation. Peace fades away as Uncle Sam steps into the circle with the American flag.

As the American flag comes in, the "Star Spangled Banner" is sung off stage. All characters gather on the stage and sing "America."

## XII. Finale: "America."

## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: SOME DISPUTED FACTS

(Continued from page 35)

as if the economic events of the past few years might offer considerable argument for reinstating some of the homely advice embodied in such a fable as that of the frog who would be an ox.

Some of the dictators of what children read profess to see a deterioration of standards if children are permitted to satisfy their love of things that seem to them funny. With all seriousness these people propose absurd corruptions of jingles and old tales to teach health or other propaganda, but laughter for laughter's sake seems to have little place in their scheme of living. It has been said that "laughter is the chief thing that holds society together" and that "the very existence of humor is a kind of joke at the expense of destiny," but a child's happy giggles at the comic strip in the newspaper or the antics of Mickey Mouse on the screen should, in the minds of such critics, be frowned upon. Fortunately the natural interests of childhood in this respect are too strong to be curbed and too many agencies outside the school satisfy it. Would it not be wiser if the school recognized the value of the release in laughter and made greater provision in children's reading for it?

Another blind spot apparent among some adults who select books for children lies in their fear of "blood-and-thunder" stories for adolescent reading. They ignore the demand of boys and of an increasing number of girls that life shall be pictured as a "flashing river of bright adventure." Here again the natural impulses of children defeat such dictatorship and if the approved reading does not supply fare of this character, they find means of securing it outside the school and often of poor quality.

It has been assumed in this discussion that children do read books. The reformers appear to take that for granted, but they fail to see that the restrictions which they advocate tend to destroy the desire to read at all. It is there that the responsibility of the school really lies—to foster in the child a love for reading. When that is accomplished, controversial questions as to what he shall read lose their importance, for the child will settle them for himself. We as teachers can best serve by providing the books that will meet the needs of the child's developing interest, in as large number and variety as possible, and then keeping hands off while he reads them.



# Children and the Newspaper

MILNOR DOREY

New York Times

THE NEWSPAPER has come into high school education as an necessary aid in teaching history, civics, economics, and related subjects. It offers first hand information; it is full of dramatic human interest, and a well-directed use of it steers the mind away from the merely sensational into channels of purposeful reading. Indeed, this last office is the prime reason for organized study of the newspaper.

But what about the children in the elementary school? They also are permitted at home to have access to the daily and Sunday papers. Their little minds, so responsive to impressions, note the message conveyed in pictures more sharply than we adults imagine. The comic strips and the suggestive illustrations in the Sunday magazine sections also leave their mark.

What can be done about it? Leave the children alone to find what they can, hoping that the secondary education level will slough off the cheap, and undesirable and replace them with the thoughtful, worthwhile elements of news? Many teachers have found a better way. They bring the daily and Sunday newspaper into the school, first making a wise selection as to the type of paper they want. Appealing to the child's natural desire to cut out pictures, they begin on that basis and capitalize his instinctive learning process in the field of the senses.

Examining the outlines of some successful elementary teachers, and looking over the scrap books kept by their children, we find a wide range of interesting activities. In most cases, the work has

been done as class projects. For one division of time the whole class was interested in pets. The rotogravure section of the paper was scanned for pictures of dogs, horses, cats, birds and other unusual pets. The children were encouraged to write and talk about their own pets, and to make comparisons with the animals seen in the pictures. A scrap book was kept, with a cover illustrated with an original drawing of their favorite pet. From this, a study of wild animals was covered, pictures taken from the reproduced drawings of the Johnsons' expedition.

In the same way other projects were taken up, such as flowers, trees, gardens, babies, interesting people, unusual events, travel scenes, and the like. Children wrote and talked about their home gardens, incidents in their own lives, places they had visited, people they had met. Sports pictures were also engrossing, because it enabled the children to talk about games they played, and to ask questions about other sports. By this sort of purposeful study, children are naturally inducted into the nature and meaning of the whole human scene and made to feel part of it.

The next stage was, by the use of pictures, to acquaint the children with the drama of human life, the careers of men who are making history, with those who are helping create a decent society in which to live, with the explorers, scientists, and with people of other lands. Many children's scrap books, down as far as the first grade showed remarkable skill and insight into the meaning of what they were doing. Scrap books

of the Indians, illustrated with cut-out pictures from the newspaper, and with brief comment in simple sentences: the whole story of Byrd's great enterprise; the George Washington saga; Roosevelt's daily life; scenes and events happening in foreign countries — all these not only made the children live participants in affairs but drew their attention away from the comics and the cheap into that which was useful as well as interesting. By the same methods, some classes made a study of products, where they came from, how they are made, and how used. The attention called to Lewis Carroll brought out many books on ALICE IN WONDERLAND. Most interesting of all was the imagination shown in the original drawings done by very little children, not only on the covers of their scrap books, but in thumb nail sketches illustrating their own texts. One teacher in a New York state school developed this work into a class newspaper in which were recorded weekly all the events of the home and school life of the children. Thus motivated, they were taught how to put into single, simple sentences what they had to say; to write of important things in an interesting way, and to group all sentences together which told of the same thing. They took pride in spelling correctly, in being neat, in making each page look like print.

From this came the problem of storage and distribution. The children wanted to build shelves. They wanted to deliver the papers to their homes and to sell them to friends. The boys built a truck. One boy contributed four rubber wheels; another the wood; another the steering gear; others helped construct and paint the truck. In addition to the truck, the boys built a newsstand which the principal of the school allowed them to place in the hall. From this they sold their newspaper and some magazines for which they had taken the agency. Enterprise, industry, thrift, systematic habits, and social cooperation were the outgrowths.

What are the conclusions to be drawn from all this? Motivated reading, early grounding in correct language study, ability to write and speak freely, practical work in arithmetic, social studies, art, and above all, some sense of and participation in the meaning of human life and living. Do not snatch the newspaper away from the child because he is gloating over the "funnies," nor let him alone to browse as he will; show him that you too read the newspaper, but show him how, unconsciously, he may become an intelligent reader, ready later to do his share in the making of history.



From MR. MCTAVISH.

By Marion Bullard.

E. P. Dutton and  
Company.



# Editorial

## An Inarticulate Profession

**I**N AN article entitled "A Program of Action for the Department of Superintendence," (School and Society, January 27, 1934), Clyde R. Miller points out that the closing of thousands of schools and the restrictions placed upon public education are the results of maladjustment between the school systems and the educational system. Mr. Miller outlines for the Department a series of promotive steps to be taken to win acceptance of certain economic and educational ideals which he sets up.

At the crux of his plan is the idea of a more effectively publicized view of education. Among other things he would have each school superintendent employ "a competent teacher with newspaper training"; "train young men and women for public school publicity work"; and "require a course in public relations of every person training for school administration" with "techniques of news writing and of cooperating with the press" mastered by every school superintendent.

Mr. Miller's plan shows the current faith in organized power. To attain the ends he has in view, however, foundation work needs to be done on a wide scale and made to penetrate well down into the elementary grades. To say that every school superintendent should have on his staff "a competent teacher with newspaper training" and that "techniques of news writing and of cooperat-

ing with the press" should be known to the superintendent is voicing an impossibility until at least part of the English instruction from grade school level up covers the factual, objectively effective, journalistic type of writing. The fact of the matter is that taking the country at large, very few grade-school graduates have been trained to do competent thinking in the journalistic manner. A sense of news values is almost totally lacking, excepting as it exists in the form of native ability.

Many English teachers not only possess an ineptitude for newspaper writing, but an outright prejudice against systematic training in it. This is largely a matter of educational inheritance. The whole field of journalism was for several decades outlawed by the English teaching faculty. In many universities even today, journalism is tolerated in the curriculum as something beyond the pale of English and is frowned upon by English instructors who seem to detect in it not only hated inelegancies but a gross pragmatism as well.

The result has been that cultivated English in the public schools has been too far removed from the expressional needs of straight forward, direct dealing, life situations. The English that is taught in the schools is not, even in small part, a fact-bearing language. Such strangers are English teachers and journalists.



# Reviews and Abstracts

JANE FOSTER

**KLAAS AND JANSJI.** By Virginia Olcott. Illustrated by Constance Whittemore. Silver, Burdett. 76c

**OLD MAN DAANTJE'S BEARD.** By Leonard Roggeveen. Translated from the Dutch by David C. DeJong. Illustrated by Ilse Bischoff. Appleton-Century, 1933. \$1.50

Virginia Olcott has already proved that a supplementary reading book need not be dull and without literary charm. *KLAAS AND JANSJI* is the fourth publication in "The World's Children Series," and like its predecessors, it is full of lively information, absorbingly presented. What child can resist a book about Holland, full of dikes, tulips, windmills, and dog-drawn carts, not to mention *flensjes* and other mouth-watering goodies? In this book Virginia Olcott has, in her own inimitable manner, summoned up all the charm of that quaint, comfortable land.

Like the other books in the series, the volume is gaily and beautifully illustrated by Constance Whittemore. The book serves a triple purpose; it gives its readers enjoyment and information, and in addition adds immeasurably to the enjoyment of other books on Holland.

*OLD MAN DAANTJE'S BEARD*, a merry yarn by a Dutch schoolmaster, is great fun to the reader who has visited little Dutch villages with Klaas and Jansji. It concerns the trouble that befell Daantje when he left his house in a temper because his wife had pork and cabbage for dinner. He falls into a barbed-wire fence, tears his coat and what is far worse, tangles his fine long beard—the very longest beard in town—so that it has to be cut off to let Daantje go free. When poor Daantje returns home, beardless and in a coat he borrowed from a scarecrow, no one knows him, and the mayor, the policeman, the village poet, the neighbors,—indeed the whole town—are set in a flurry.

It is a book to rouse any reader, young or old, to a series of chuckles.

**ALL AROUND THE ALPHABET.** By Lena Towseley and her Camera. Farrar and Rinehart, 1933. \$1.00

**THE FAIRY ALPHABET** as Used by Merlin. Written and Drawn by E. MacKinstry. Viking Press, 1933. \$1.50

Both of these are primarily picture books, the alphabet serving obligingly as a framework. Here, however, similarities cease.

*ALL AROUND THE ALPHABET* is a collection of photographs of children in everyday surroundings—eating, yawning, playing—with only the two traditional exceptions, a cat and a dog. If the pictures are as delightful to children as they are to grown-ups, the book should be successful in teaching the letters.

Elizabeth MacKinstry's *FAIRY ALPHABET* is an elaborate and beautiful series of drawings. However, both the pictures and the verses are far beyond the appreciation of children learning their letters, and children who have progressed to the point where they are able to read fairy tales by themselves would be shy of any alphabet book, as would older boys and girls.

The text presupposes a somewhat extensive knowledge of literature, for example "K is Kilmeny," and "N is Nick Bottom." Moreover, rhyme and pictures are sometimes confusing. "Q is for Questions—and see that you ask them!" reads the legend under a picture of a frog with fairies capering about him. There is nothing to suggest questioning either in the attitude of frog or fairies. This is followed by a drawing of a diving frog, which illustrates "R is for running when you overtask them!"

Clearly this is a book only for the exceptional child, or for the adult of somewhat specialized tastes.

# The National Conference on Research In Elementary School English

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING — CLEVELAND, OHIO

February 24-27, 1934

Headquarters — Hotel Statler

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## BREAKFAST AND BUSINESS MEETING

8:30 A. M.—Saturday, February 24

The Lattice Room

Presiding: Harry A. Greene, Director of Bureau of Educational Research and Service,  
University of Iowa, Iowa City.

A Study of the Causes of Poor Sentence Structure in Written Composition—

Ethel Mabie, Supervisor, Curriculum and Method, Public Schools, Madison, Wis.

The Genetic Development of Articulation in Children's Speech—

Irene Poole, University Elementary School, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Current Research in Elementary School English and Suggestions for the Third Annual Research  
Bulletin—

By members of the Conference.

Business: Committee on Current Manuscripts—Josephine MacLachy, Chairman, College of  
Education, Ohio State University, Columbus. Appointment of Nominating Committee.

Executive Committee Meeting, Luncheon, 12:00 o'clock noon.

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## LUNCHEON AND RESEARCH REPORT MEETING

Noon—12:00 o'clock and Early Afternoon, February 27

Private Dining Room 441

Presiding: F. H. Bair, Superintendent of Schools, Shaker Heights City School District.

The Second Annual Bulletin—A Critical Summary of Selective Research in Composition,  
Language, and Grammar—by the Bibliographical Committee.

Presentation of the Bulletin with a discussion of possible future research in elementary school  
composition—Walter Scribner Guiler, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

Some Limitations of Recent Research in Elementary School Composition—

E. A. Betts, Principal, Lomond School, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

Critical Evaluations by—

Philip A. Boyer, Director, Educational Research, Board of Education, Philadelphia.

William L. Connor, Chief, Bureau of Educational Research, Board of Education,  
Cleveland.

Paul McKee, Colorado State Teachers College, Greeley, Colorado.

W. W. Theisen, Assistant Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools.

G. A. Yoakam, Professor of Education and Director of Courses in Elementary  
Education, School of Education, University of Pittsburg, Pittsburg.

Discussion—led by Bess Goodykoontz, Assistant Commissioner, U. S. Office of Education.

Report of Nominating Committee, and Election of Officers.

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## Officers of the Conference 1933-1934:

President: Harry A. Greene, Director of Bureau of Educational Research and Service,  
University of Iowa, Iowa City.

Vice-President: Bess Goodykoontz, Assistant Commissioner of Education, U. S. Office of  
Education, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

Secretary-Treasurer: C. C. Certain, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan.

Executive Committee: Officers of the Conference, and M. R. Trabue, University of North  
Carolina, Chapel Hill. Robert Pooley, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

## Recent Publications

**Reversal Tendencies in Reading: Causes, Diagnosis, Prevention, and Correction.** By ARTHUR I. GATES and CHESTER C. BENNETT. 33 pp. Paper, 40 cents. This study includes the following topics: A Study of "Reversals" and "Non-Reversals," Left-Handedness as a Cause of Difficulty in Reading, the Theory of Eye-Dominance, Mixed-Eye Dominance, the Theory of Mixed Eye-and-Hand Dominance, the Influence of Sex, the Influence of Visual Defects, Additional Explanations of "Reversal" Tendencies in Reading, Preventive Instruction, Diagnosis and Remedial Instruction, and an Outline of Remedial Work.

**Gates-Pearson Practice Exercises in Reading—Book V.** Four booklets, one for each of the four fundamental types of reading, 30c each. Manual, 25c. Specimen set, one of each of the booklets with Manual, \$1.00. These exercises are adapted for use by superior fourth, average fifth and sixth, and below average seventh and eighth grade pupils. Books III and IV of this series are also available.

**The Influence of Familiarity Upon Children's Preferences for Pictures and Poems.** By MARCIA E. MENDENHALL and JAMES E. MENDENHALL. 74 pp. Cloth, \$1.50.

An investigation conducted with junior high school students to discover how important a factor familiarity might be in aesthetic preference, what type of pictures and poems they liked, and what scientific techniques might prove helpful in studies of aesthetics.

**The Importance of Reading for Achieving in Grades Four, Five, and Six.** By DORRIS MAY LEE, Ph.D. 64 pp. Cloth, \$1.50.

A report of the results of a study to determine to what extent reading ability tends to bring about discrepancy between ability and achievement. Results of the study show the critical level of reading ability which must be reached if general achievement is not to suffer because of poor reading.

*Other publications of interest to teachers of English are in press.*

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